

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4283

INFO USMISSION NATO

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJ: DUTCH REACTION TO POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF GENERAL
HAIG TO SACEUR POST

REF: AMBASSADOR GOULD'S SEPTEMBER 4 TELECONS WITH
ASST. SECY HARTMAN

1. CONFIRMING REFERENCED TELECONS FONOFF SYG SCHIFF
TOLD AMBASSADOR NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 4 THAT GON FELT
"SLIGHT WONDER" AT SELECTION OF GENERAL HAIG FOR SACEUR
POST. GON REACTION WAS NOT RPT NOT DUE TO ANY QUESTION
ABOUT GENERAL HAIG'S PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE BUT RATHER
TO HIS CLOSE CONNECTION WITH THE PRIOR US ADMINISTRATION
WHICH, IN THE DUTCH JUDGMENT, COULD HAVE SOME POSSIBLE
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE "THE IMAGE OF NATO."

2. SCHIFF STRESSED THAT THERE WAS NO "OPPOSITION" ON
THE PART OF THE GON. HOWEVER, AFTER BEING INFORMED OF
GENERAL HAIG'S POSSIBLE NOMINATION, THE GON HAD DECIDED
TO CONSULT WITH ITS ALLIES IN BRUSSELS AND AMBASSADOR
HARTOGH HAD BEEN SO INSTRUCTED. THE STORY OF THE PRO-
POSED APPOINTMENT AND THE ALLEGED DUTCH OPPOSITION,
SCHIFF CONTINUED, BROKE IN AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE AND UPI
IN BRUSSELS. THE LATTER TELEPHONED FONMIN VAN DER STOEL
IN FINLAND (WHERE HE IS ACCOMPANYING THE QUEEN ON A
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STATE VISIT). VAN DER STOEL, NOT KNOWING WHETHER THE

QUESTION OF GENERAL HAIG'S APPOINTMENT HAD LEGITIMATELY BEEN PUT INTO THE PUBLIC DOMAIN REFUSED COMMENT.

3. RECAPITULATING, SCHIFF SAID THERE IS NO PRESENT GON OPPOSITION BUT THERE IS "WONDER". THE DUTCH ARE CONSULTING THEIR NATO COLLEAGUES AS IS CUSTOMARY ON MATTERS LIKE THIS, AND WILL GIVE THEIR POSITION SHORTLY, PERHAPS ONLY AFTER VAN DER STOEL RETURNS FROM FINLAND ON SEPTEMBER 6.

4. FONOFF TOLD EMBASSY MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 5 THAT THE UPI MAN IN BRUSSELS PICKED UP THE SEPTEMBER 4 WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING MENTIONING THAT THE SACEUR POST WAS ONE OF THE NEW ASSIGNMENTS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR GENERAL HAIG AND ASKED AMBASSADOR HARTOGH FOR HIS COMMENT. WHEN THE VARIOUS VERSIONS OF WHAT HARTOGH SAID BEGAN TO COME OVER THE WIRES, THE FONOFF PRESS SPOKESMAN TOLD THE LOCAL PRESS AGENCY (ANP) ON THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 4 THAT HARTOUGH, IN HIS STATEMENT, HAD DENIED KNOWING IF THERE WAS ANY OFFICIAL DUTCHOPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENT. FONOFF PRESS SPOKESMAN LIKEWISE DENIED DIRECTLY TO THE ANP JOURNALIST ANY KNOWLEDGE OF ANY DUTCH OPPOSITION. FONOFF SPOKESMAN CONTINUED THAT, AS HARTOGH HAD TOLD THE UPI MAN, IT WAS NORMAL IN SUCH CASES FOR THERE TO BE CONSIDERATION AMONG NATO ALLIES.

5. MORNING PRESS HAS SEVERAL STORIES BASED ON UPI REPORT, FONOFF ORAL STATEMENT AND BRUSSELS SOURCES, THE GIST OF WHICH REFLECTS SOME CONFUSION ON SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND JUST WHERE THE GON STANDS. ONE PAPER (VADERLAND) CRITICIZES ALLEGED DUTCH HESITATION AND DEFENDS GENERAL HAIG'S PROPOSED APPOINTMENT. MORNING PRESS DOES NOT, HOWEVER, PICK UP VAN DER STOEL'S "NO COMMENT" FROM HELSINKI. FULL SUMMARY OF MORNING PRESS STORIES BEING SENT IN THROUGH USIS.

6. REPORT ON AMBASSADOR'S SEPTEMBER 5 CONVERSATION WITH FONOFF POLITICAL DIRECTOR VAN LYNDEN FOLLOWS IN SEPTEL. GOULD

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